The Sketch

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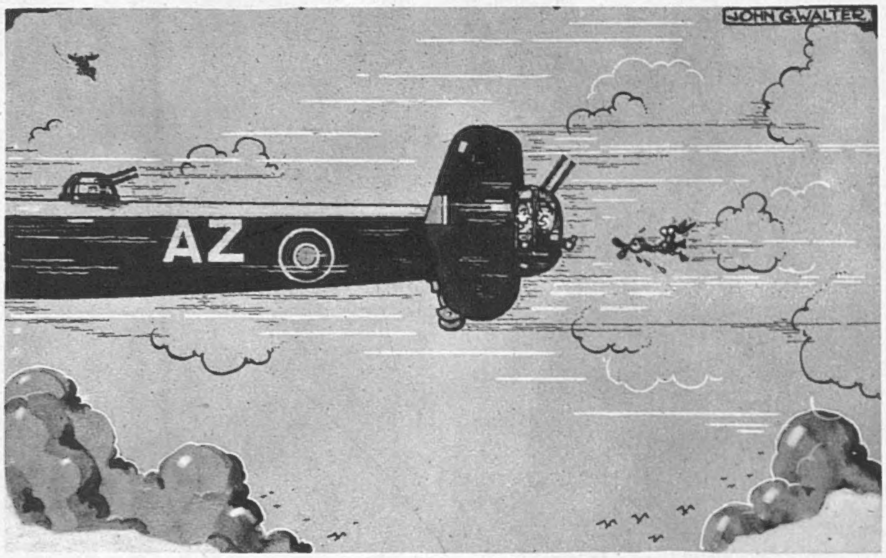
JENNIFER JONES IN "THE SONG OF BERNADETTE."

"The Song of Bernadette," from Franz Werfel's novel of that name, has been filmed by Twentieth Century-Fox. JENNIFER JONES *plays the part of Bernadette Soubirous, the peasant girl who, through a series of visions in 1858, discovered the healing spring which was to draw each year to the grotto of Massanielle at Lourdes thousands of pilgrims in search of relief from pain.*

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP

The Depressed Classes. The poet wrote sympathetically of " the short and simple annals of the poor " ; but they are much less an object of pity than the long and complicated annals of the rich. With all these Code Numbers and allowances and provisional estimates and adjustments, I am not sure that even the annals of the poor are going to be so short and simple in future ; but, however that may be, the rich continue to have their faces ground in a manner which shocks (of all people) that life-long Socialist, Mr. G. Bernard Shaw. He objects to being a tax-collector for the Government for a commission of 6d. in the £, which he considers inadequate for his services. He protests at paying £20,000 a year to help finance a war which " would never have happened " if his advice had been taken. He asks for relief from surtax for the pathetic Submerged Tenth of the population who have incomes of over £20,000 per annum. And he urges us to shorten the war by encouraging the profiteer to make more and more profits, with less and less E.P.T. I did not quite understand how or why the quislings entered the economic argument, but they are to be encouraged too, and, I suppose, exempt from any Schedule D assessment.



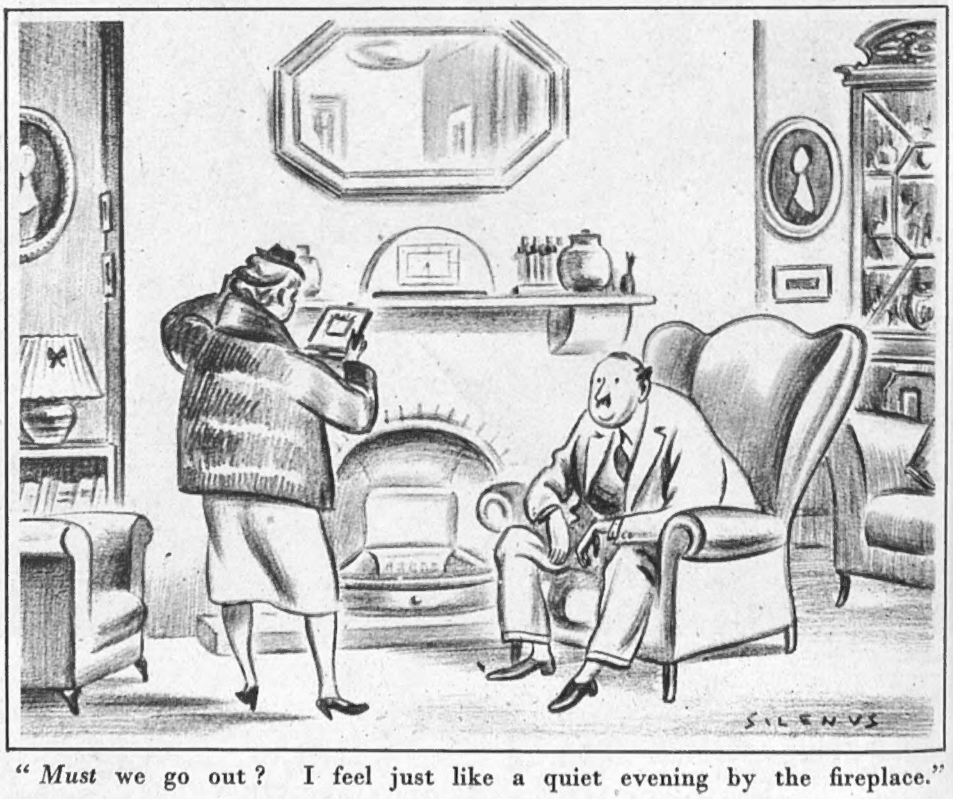
" Don't be a tease, Jenkins ; let it have the biscuit ! "

DRAWN BY JOHN G WALTER.

The Mammon of Unrighteousness. While my heart bleeds for all victims of circumstances whose incomes run to five, and whose capital runs to six, figures, I am sufficiently preoccupied with my ten shillings to restrain within due bounds my sympathy for their nineteen-and-six. At the same time, I am a little surprised that such a heart-cry should come from this particular source. You Never Can Tell whether Mr. Shaw is wholly serious, and his passionate plea for bigger and better capitalism may be designed merely to pull all our legs. But if not, the economic argument perplexes me. It seems to be that so long as a capitalist system exists in a capitalist world, you should exploit it for all it is worth (especially for war purposes), not penalise it until it is worth nothing. But—I ask the question not as a matter of politics, but of dialectics—is that quite Fabian ? If that is to be the method, will you be bringing about the millennium by the " inevitability of gradualness " ? I only want to know, because it has struck me (and others) that the possession of a lot of capital sometimes affects people's logic about capitalism.

A Firm Offer. Meanwhile, I have a suggestion to make to Mr. Shaw. He says that he lives in terror lest some admirer should leave him a million, and thus reduce him to penury. But I can assure him that he has many admirers who, far from inflicting this hardship upon him, would rush to his assistance by the converse method. Instead of adding to his burdens, they would, without a thought of self, relieve him of them. Speaking for myself, I cannot bear the thought of so distinguished a literary figure being harassed and oppressed in his old age ; and I would unhesitatingly sacrifice myself to the extent of collecting, say, a couple of hundred thousand nineteen-and-sixpences on his behalf for the Government. I am not one to quarrel about the size of the commission in a good cause. If these lines should meet Mr. Shaw's eye, he has only to send me a post-card, and I will put the matter in the hands of my solicitors at once. I am sure that there are many other patriotic citizens who would render the same service, so that Mr. Shaw really need not feel any anxiety.

The Great Uncontrollable. Should this arrangement commend itself to Mr. Shaw, I might find myself in a position to buy my wife a new hat. Otherwise, I see little prospect of gratifying this generous and, I hope, laudable impulse. Harsh things have been said lately in the House of Commons about " exorbitant charges for ladies' millinery " ; wounding references have been made to " the amazing shapes and sizes and unnecessary waste of material." Mr. Dalton has too much regard for his political reputation to attempt to control shapes and sizes even by Statutory Rules and Orders. You cannot, he says, define that which is in its nature indefinable ; and the shape of women's hats belongs to the realm of the indefinable, the incomprehensible and the unguessable. It is no use talking about austerity, because the price of hats is not measured by mere area or by wealth of herbage, fruitage, plumage or garbage ; the more " simple " it is, the more expensive it is. All these things, which



" *Must* we go out ? I feel just like a quiet evening by the fireplace."

DRAWN BY SILENUS.

SALVAGE ALL YOUR OLD LETTERS—FOR VICTORY

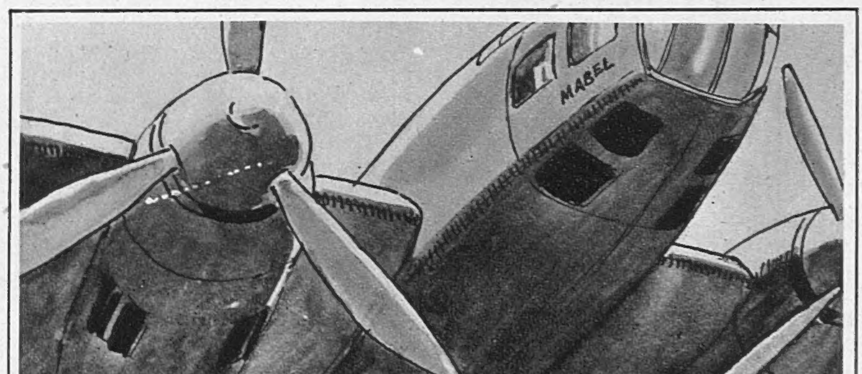
doubtless have been discovered by the massed forces of the Board of Trade after exhaustive researches, have long been known to millions of husbands by the process of trial and error—numerous errors by wives and severe trials for husbands.

From Strength to Strength. And so woman scores another victory; the tyrant of Whitehall can rob men of the pockets and the turn-ups which are essential to their existence, but millinery defies the utmost ingenuity of Control! Other triumphs undoubtedly lie ahead. I have always expected it, and now it has come—a strike of mothers is threatened. They have been writing to the papers declaring that after the war they will demand a weekly day off, with the baby in a public nursery. I read, too, that female prisoners are in future to be allowed lipstick, powder, dressing-tables and mirrors, though no mention is made of perms.

And on all very sultry days,
Cream ices handed round on trays,

as on H.M.S. "Mantelpiece." I also observe that the Y.W.C.A. has now established a "marriage bureau," which finds the cake, the bridal gown, the bridesmaids, the best man—in fact, everything except the bridegroom; and surely that is a grave omission? And thus the Monstrous Regiment carries on; but please do not interpret this (doubtless envious) murmur as a Blast of the Trumpet, for I am no John Knox nor a competitor in his class of masculine righteousness.

Be It Ever So Humble. Hats, lipstick, bridesmaids, even bridegrooms—these are all important, but perhaps not so important as that age-old desideratum, "a home of your own." People have been wondering where that was coming from, in sufficient quantity, but the Ministry of Health is equal to little problems like that. We have already had the "half-house," which appears to be a sort of compromise between a bungalow and a tank-block, but now we are to have something far more sumptuous—a whole house, h. and c., standing in own spacious grounds, company's water, gravel soil, usual offices, all turned out in twenty-four hours. The material is "stressed (or dressed?) skin plywood," whatever that may be; it does not sound very weatherproof to me, but it is guaranteed to last for ten years. The sections are manufactured in the morning and bolted together in the afternoon, and the happy couple are in residence in the evening. And the beauty of the whole thing is that if you don't like the neighbours or the situation, you can just put the love-nest on a wheelbarrow and push it to a more congenial locality. Truly, this is *confort moderne*!



"The trouble is, Sir, I'm getting into a rut!"

DRAWN BY HAILSTONE.

Golden Voice.

These and similar blessings of civilisation are always borne in upon me at a railway terminus, when I find myself being directed, exhorted and advised by a dozen metallic and disembodied voices from all points of the compass. It is true that I can seldom understand a word they are saying, and even when I can, I can never get the time of the train or the platform, because just at that point an impatient engine always hisses indignantly in my ear. However, the elocution is beautiful, and for real refanement and gentility of accent the B.B.C. is an also-ran. I see that one terminus is now to have no fewer than 123 megaphones, all adjusted to the "volume of noise" on the station, and localising "directional beams" of sound on selected groups of bewildered passengers. Travelling is a strenuous business, anyhow, nowadays, and though I am sure that these golden voices mean to be helpful, I am of King Lear's opinion that an unamplified tone is "an excellent thing in woman," and, frankly, I would rather that these monitresses did not lecture me so much.

The New Conquistadores.

The counsel of perfection, as we have all been taught, is to love your enemies. There are times when this is almost easier than to love your friends; but most difficult of all is to love your allies. I doubt whether in any war the feat has ever been accomplished. It is a great pity—but people are *so* unreasonable. For example, Colonel Robert McCormick, that indefatigable patriot, thinks it was unreasonable, and, indeed, very naughty of Great Britain to have

"My baker's boy was very pleased with Mr. Stalin this morning."

DRAWN BY IAN PETERSON.

had an army of 300,000 ready to invade the United States after the last war. I am not sure whether this campaign was meant to be a personal attack on Colonel McCormick or just a simple little manœuvre to annex the entire United States. Whichever it was, I agree with Colonel McCormick that it was very wrong of us even to think of such a thing, but I wonder whether the Colonel has not got hold of the wrong file? I suspect that he has mixed up George V. with George III., and it is very possible that he does not realise that they were two quite different persons.

Always Ready to Oblige.

While Colonel McCormick very naturally thinks it unreasonable of us to annex the United States—for, as a distinguished British statesman is supposed to have said to an equally distinguished American statesman, "We shall be quite satisfied if you give us back the West End"—we think it a little unreasonable of Colonel McCormick to annex Australia and New Zealand, in addition to expelling us

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from Canada and liquidating all our investments in North and South America. This is perhaps a little excessive, but I am sure that none of us wants to seem grudging or obstinate. Thus I see that another American publicist urges us not to be so peculiar about our rule of the road. It is, apparently, to be part of world-planning that we should adopt the right instead of the left, and I suppose it will be only a matter of time before we have dollars and cents, too. Well, I suppose there is no resisting the march of progress, but it *would* be nice to keep one or two things which are not matters of reason, but matters of history.

"For goodness' sake, Pettigrew, write a new story to send to the periodicals—that 's the eleventh time I 've had to censor the same confounded manuscript!"

DRAWN BY L. B. MARTIN.

"Come and look, Tommy—a man drorin' in Technicolor!"

DRAWN BY JOHN G. WALTER.

Pollyanna.

When these little difficulties arise between Allies: when, in private or public relations, tempers are frayed and sharp words are spoken: people talk about "pouring oil." I don't think it would be much good pouring oil on Colonel McCormick—it would only add to his grievances, especially if it were boiling oil; what is really needed in these situations is scientific vitaminisation. I seem to refer rather frequently to vitamins, but the fact is that I cannot escape the subject; wherever I turn, whatever paper I open, it confronts me—indeed, it haunts me. Now it seems that the state of your temper depends very largely on your supply of B vitamins, and especially B1. It is not very encouraging to be told that you can get this from milk (short supply), orange juice (non-existent), and yolk of egg (extinct); but there are always cabbage and porridge, and now it appears that there is also honey (rare), to produce a sunny disposition. Moral: when tempted to say an unkind word, lick a spoonful of honey. As an impediment to dirty cracks, this has no peer. How comforted am I to see that B1 contains not only riboflavin, but nicotinic acid! At least I am getting a regular supply of *that*!

One Man's Meat.

It is not only the soft answer, fostered by Vitamin B1, that turneth away wrath, but sometimes it is also the unexpected answer. Such was the unstudied repartee of a D. and I. (drunk and incapable, if you are not familiar with Basic English) who excused himself to the magistrate on the ground that he had been feeling very unwell and depressed, and thought that "a bit of a blind" would cheer him up. "Well," said the magistrate, with an expression both of piety and of hope, "do you feel any the better for it now?" "Yes, thank you, Sir," said the defendant brightly; "I 'm feeling very much better to-day." Magistrates have large experience of human nature, but even they don't know all the answers.

Behind the Times.

But "a bit of a blind" is not the only way to feel very much better. An Hon. Member said in the House the other day: "I have not read *The Times* for the last three years, and have felt very much better ever since." Total abstinence, you see, is sometimes the better prescription.

Covering the H.Q. of a certain Command this week, our artist produces what may genuinely be referred to as a combined operational effort—for here we have elements of the ARMY *working in liaison with the* ROYAL AIR FORCE, *and getting on with the job.*

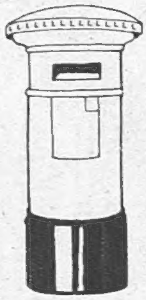
The eighty-third of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of "The Sketch" is by* DAVID WRIGHT.

THE VOICE - SAVER.

DRAWN BY FRANK REYNOLDS.

Please forward

By JOYCE DENNYS.



MY DEAR ROBERT—I have been to a Party, or rather a Partee, because it was given by Americans. When George, who is a very old friend as well as being an American, rang up from our Cathedral City and asked me to the Partee, Charles, and Lady B., and Faith, and the Conductor thought he was trying to be funny.

I returned to the telephone. "Are you being funny, George?" I said.

"Funny? Hell! I'm assking you to a Partee. I thought you said you liked Partees?"

"I do like Parties, and I think it's very sweet of you to ask me."

"I like arsking you," said George in an exaggerated English voice. "As a matter of fact, it's a wedding."

I put down the receiver and returned to the drawing-room. "It's a wedding," I said.

"I suppose the poor girl hasn't got a mother and they want somebody to tell her the Facts Of Life," said Charles.

"She probably has got a mother," said Faith, "and they want another middle-aged woman to keep her company."

"Perhaps George just wants Henrietta to go with him," said Lady B. kindly.

"But Henrietta never *goes* to parties," said Faith.

"Nor will you, Faith," I said, "when little Nowell is grown up."

"I will!" said Faith.

"Well, she won't like it. Girls like their mothers to sit at home with their knitting."

"You go and enjoy yourself," said Charles,

"'Are you being funny, George?'"

I went back to the telephone in the hall. "Hullo?"

"Hello. I thought you'd gone for one of those long country walks you English are so keen about."

"I'd love to come to the Partee, George."

"Fine."

I returned to the drawing-room and found everybody discussing my clothes. "She hasn't a thing fit to wear," said Faith.

"There's my Fuchsia," I said.

"With three darns down the front of the skirt," said Faith witheringly.

"If you're going to this thing at all," said Charles, "you must go properly dressed."

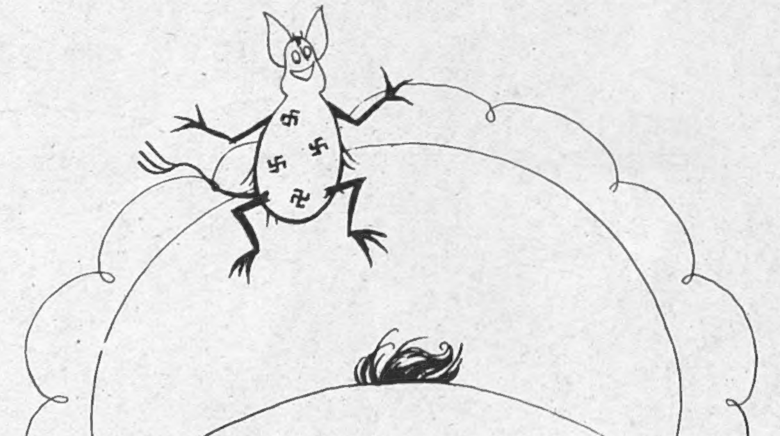
"You must get a new frock," said Lady B. firmly. "You don't want the Linnet to be ashamed of you."

"And do make up your face properly, Henrietta," said Faith. "Don't just dab some powder on your nose and think that's enough."

In the end, I bought a new frock, *and* a new hat, and the Squander Bug sat on my pillow all night, singing in a high, thin little voice.

On the morning of the Party Charles sat up in bed and said: "How's the Party-Girl?"

"I'm not going," I said. "It's a very cold day, I feel tired and I know I shouldn't enjoy myself."



"The Squander Bug sat on my pillow all night."

"You must go," said Charles, "if it's only to amuse Lady B. and me. Besides, you promised. You don't want George to go back to America and say English women don't know how to behave, do you?" So I went.

I arrived in our Cathedral City cold and low in spirits. In spite of a careful make-up, my face, in the glass of the Hotel Ladies' Cloak, looked pink in some places and blue in others. The Linnet and George were very kind to me all through lunch, and told me how much they liked my hat and my frock, but my thoughts kept turning in a nostalgic way to my home, and Charles, and Perry, and Evensong, and the kitten, and I wondered how they were getting on without me. Then we got into a taxi and went to the wedding.

Towards the end of the service George bent down and whispered: "Cheer up. You'll enjoy yourself in a minute." I did.

Outside, in the road, were drawn up twenty Jeeps. The front Jeep had two tin cans attached to it by long strings, and an enormous placard on the back saying, "Just Married." Heading the procession was a lorry with the band in it. I noticed that nearly all the officers, who looked like naughty schoolboys, were carrying large, unexploded fireworks.

"There aren't going to be Bangs, are there, George?"

"I'll say there are!" said George.

Then the Married Couple emerged from the Church, and the little Bride, protesting faintly, was lifted into the first Jeep, the guests and their escorts clambered into the other nineteen, the Band struck up a rousing tune, and amid cheers, and a series of shattering explosions, the Procession started.

Our Cathedral City was literally and figuratively shaken. Like a barrage balloon which has escaped from its moorings, my spirits rose and soared. I saw Mrs. Whinebite standing in the crowd. "Hullo, Mrs. Whinebite!" I shouted, and she cut me dead.

Outside the station we passed another wedding, all white satin and family veils, coming from the Cathedral. They waved to us and we waved to them, and I wondered whether they were enjoying themselves as much as we were.

When we got back to the Mess, the Linnet introduced me all round and everybody began calling me Mummy, which wasn't exactly what I'd hoped for, but half a tumblerful of what looked like orange-juice, but tasted a good deal nicer, had induced in me a carefree attitude towards life, and I didn't really mind. And, oh! Robert, how well they danced! I hadn't enjoyed dancing so much since you went away.

"The procession started."

"Have another drink, Mummy?"

"Over magnolia blooms and lilied lakes——"

"Why are you saying that?"

"I always say that to see whether I ought to have another drink or not."

"And ought you?"

"No."

George and the Linnet, who were listening-in to this conversation, went away to telephone to Charles and tell him I was having a good time.

The one called Big Feet came to see me off at the station, and I kissed him good-bye. I mean, if you've been called Mummy all the afternoon, you can do these things.

Charles and Lady B. were at the station this end to meet me. As I got out of the train, Charles said: "Here comes the Red-Hot Momma."

Always your affectionate Childhood's Friend,

HENRIETTA

SCOTTISH-AMERICAN ENGAGEMENT

The engagement of LADY BRIDGET ELLIOT, *elder daughter of the Earl and Countess of Minto, to* MAJOR JAMES AVERELL CLARK, JNR., D.F.C., U.S.A.A.F., *elder son of Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Clark, of Westbury, Long Island, New York, has been announced. Lady Minto is Canadian by birth. She is a daughter of Mr. G. W. Cook, of Montreal, and married Lord Minto in 1921. Lord Minto's father, the fourth Earl, was Governor-General of Canada from 1898-1904, so the family have a strong connection with the New World.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HARLIP AND G.P.U.

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

"THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA" (Odeon) is thick-ear of the thickest. It is altogether preposterous, and it should make a packet of money. If I were an exhibitor, I should be standing in the dawn queue waiting to book this picture. The public will adore it. At the performance I attended, the public did. The current "Phantom" is a re-make of an old Lon Chaney picture. But it is a remake with considerable extras—music, dialogue and colour. Colour and sound, when they are as good as this, can do quite a lot for a film that is set on the stage and behind the scenes of an opera-house. Music is the *raison d'être*—if you can talk about *raison* in this connection—of "The Phantom of the Opera." Colour—formal, designed stage colour—is its natural embellishment. Between them they can make you forget the incredibility of the proposition, or, at any rate, not care a hoot.

The horrid story of "The Phantom" is about a middle-aged violinist (Claude Rains) who cherishes a secret passion for the prima donna's youthful understudy (Susanna Foster). The understudy seems fated to understudy for the rest of her life, when the violinist takes a hand in her promotion. Fired from the orchestra; betrayed by a publisher who has stolen his concerto, and whom he finds it immediately imperative to murder; disfigured by a pan of acid flung in his face by the publisher's lady secretary; wanted by the police, and owing several months' rent to his landlady, he moves himself and his grand piano into a sewer apartment under the Opera-house, and starts out on his career as a Phantom.

Cloaked, and masked in a horrid shade of duck-egg blue, the Phantom haunts the 400-odd rooms of the opera. He gives the understudy her first break by drugging the prima donna just before her big aria in the opera "Amour et Gloire." But this is merely an interim measure. On further consideration he strangles the p.d. *and* her maid, *and* a man from the Sûreté, and brings the great chandelier crashing down on the orchestra stalls during a performance of the opera "Le Prince Masqué de Caucasie." These vigorous measures achieve their end. The understudy becomes a star, after a particularly nasty five minutes down in the sewer with the now quite nutty Phantom. As a story, "The Phantom" is fantastic, but as a film it's fine fun. The Technicolor, keyed down to an elegant range of pastel tones, off-whites, and off-greys, with just an occasional vivid note of colour, is the best I have ever seen in films of this kind. The singing is well taken care of by the young Susanna Foster and the veteran Nelson Eddy, and the score is an ingenious spree. Except for an inveigling little theme-song, called "The Melody of the Bells," and an extract from the third act of Flotow's "Martha," the music is mostly loans from classical composers; rearranged for soprano and baritone, and regrouped into fictitious operas with original titles. If you are the Puzzle Corner type of listener, take a pencil and paper with you to "The Phantom of the Opera"; go with a friend of the same quiz mind, and see how many tunes you can spot apiece.

Should your appetite for chills be unabated after "The Phantom," you can go to the New Gallery and see "THE LODGER," a cosy little version of the Jack the Ripper story, with Laird Cregar as Whitechapel's Famed Friend. Picturegoers with long memories may be able to recall the silent arrangement of "The Lodger," with Ivor Novello and June, which our own Alfred Hitchcock made here in the middle 1920s. Perhaps, though, on second thoughts, it would be wiser not to recall it. For Hitchcock's "Lodger" was quite a remarkable picture. The opening reels, in which the atmosphere of panic and horror was established, are still regarded by connoisseurs as one of the classic examples of the expressionism current at the time. The new "Lodger," I should say, has little chance of being remembered in the '60s as a classic example of anything. It is just another thriller of London's gaslight era, less persuasive than several, more ingenious than some.

The real mystery of Jack the Ripper's identity, motive and fate has never been satisfactorily settled, but "The Lodger" makes no bones about it. The Ripper—or The Avenger, as the synopsis prefers to call him—is an experimental pathologist who works at University College Hospital. His hobby is slashing the throats of actresses down Whitechapel way, with a surgical knife which he carries in a small black bag. He specialises in actresses because an actress has dragged his artist brother down into the mire. Apart from this one weakness, the Ripper is a sensitive soul, it seems; a gentle soul, even a religious soul. He finds comfort in the Bible, and he has a loathing for his butcher's job. Since this is a movie and not everyday life, he has to be identified and tracked down by the forces of law and order. But since he is a man of stature, his end is allowed to be a lofty one. Cornered, wounded, desperate and alone, he leaps from a high window into the waters of the Thames. "Deep water drew him," murmurs the actress whom he has just failed to murder, with what is called a "suspicious moisture" of the eyes. "Deep water sweeps the city clean," observes his landlady, an imaginative, Hibernian type. It's uplifting. It's beautiful. It's improbable.

The way "The Lodger" is presented, there is barely the smallest doubt of the Ripper's identity. From the moment when Mr. Cregar turns up out of the night at Sir Cedric Hardwicke's Bloomsbury house, the mark of Cain is upon him. He comes with an agent's order to view a room to let, but his appearance, his behaviour, and the hour of his arrival are enough to send any solid householder straight to the police. For some time I hoped against hope that Sir Cedric, oddly bearded, and behaving oddly, too, might prove to be the killer, but alas! it was not to be. My hopes died when I found that the Ripper's next scheduled victim was Miss Merle Oberon, a

THE BEST PLAYS.

Starred by "The Sketch." ***=*highest value.*

*** "BLITHE SPIRIT" (*Duchess*). Noel Coward's play. Betty Ann Davies, Cecil Parker, Irene Browne, Beryl Measor.

*** "PINK STRING AND SEALING WAX" (*Duke of York's*). 1880 Brighton comedy. Iris Hoey, Dorothy Hyson, David Horne.

** "THE DANCING YEARS" (*Adelphi*). Ivor Novello in his romantic musical play, with Muriel Barron and Roma Beaumont.

** "THE CRADLE SONG" (*Apollo*). John Gielgud's production of Spanish play. Wendy Hiller, Frederick Leister, Muriel Aked.

** "THE LISBON STORY" (*Hippodrome*). Play with music.

** "SOMETHING IN THE AIR" (*Palace*). Musical, with Jack Hulbert, Cicely Courtneidge.

** "ARC DE TRIOMPHE" (*Phœnix*). Ivor Novello's Paris cavalcade—1906-1925—with Mary Ellis, Raymond Lovell, Peter Graves, Elisabeth Welch.

** "PANAMA HATTIE" (*Piccadilly*). Musical comedy, with Bébé Daniels, Richard Hearne, Max Wall, Ivan Brandt, Claude Hulbert.

** "STRIKE A NEW NOTE" (*Prince of Wales*). George Black's revue, with the rising generation and Sid Field.

** "MY SISTER EILEEN" (*Savoy*). American slapstick with Sally Gray, Coral Browne, Max Bacon.

** "ARSENIC AND OLD LACE" (*Strand*). Witty, murderous farce. Lilian Braithwaite, Mary Jerrold, Naunton Wayne, Frank Pettingell, Edmund Willard.

** "WHILE THE SUN SHINES" (*Globe*). Rattigan's inter-allied complications without tears. Jane Baxter, Ronald Squire, Hugh McDermott.

** "SWEETER AND LOWER" (*Ambassadors*). Second edition of "Sweet and Low" revue: Hermione Gingold and Henry Kendall.

** "JUNIOR MISS" (*Saville*). Comedy with the accent on youth. Joan White, Peggy Cummins.

** "HI-DE-HI" (*Stoll*). Hilarious revue, with Flanagan and Allen, Florence Desmond, Eddie Gray.

** "IT'S TIME TO DANCE" (*Lyric*). With Jack Buchanan, Fred Emney, Elsie Randolph.

** "THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT" (*Aldwych*). Wonderful acting by the Lunts in Robert Sherwood play.

* "A SOLDIER FOR CHRISTMAS" (*Wyndham's*). Light comedy: Joyce Barbour, Robert Beatty.

* "THE DRUID'S REST" (*St. Martin's Theatre*). Emlyn Williams's light comedy, with Gladys Henson, Michael Shepley.

* "AN IDEAL HUSBAND" (*Westminster*). Donat's ideal Wilde revival. Irene Vanbrugh, Martita Hunt, Esme Percy.

* "THIS TIME IT'S LOVE" (*Comedy*). Comedy from the French: George Desmond, Ellen Pollock, Charles Heslop, Beryl Mason.

* "SHE FOLLOWS ME ABOUT" (*Garrick*). Farce. Robertson Hare, Basil Radford, Catherine Lacey, Joyce Heron.

* "LOVE FOR LOVE" (*Haymarket*). Congreve comedy with John Gielgud, Yvonne Arnaud, Leslie Banks, Leon Quartermaine.

* "TEN LITTLE NIGGERS" (*St. James's*). Agatha Christie's thriller. Linden Travers, Allan Jeayes, Terence de Marney.

* "ACACIA AVENUE" (*Vaudeville*). Comedy. Gordon Harker, Hubert Gregg, Dorothy Hamilton, Megs Jenkins.

* "THE LOVE RACKET" (*Victoria Palace*). High-speed musical with Arthur Askey and Carol Raye.

* "HALFWAY TO HEAVEN" (*Princes*). Bobby Howes, Sydney Howard, Betty Stockfield, J. H. Roberts.

PANTOMIMES AND CHILDREN'S PLAYS.

"CINDERELLA" (*His Majesty's*). Evelyn Laye, Carole Lynne.
"HUMPTY DUMPTY" (*London Coliseum*). Pat Kirkwood, Nervo and Knox, Naughton and Gold.

N.B.—While we shall always do our best to keep this list up to date, we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur. Consult your daily paper; ring up the theatre to avoid disappointment.

provincial dancer, and niece to Sir Cedric. Uncles don't commit murder in movies, whatever they may do in Shakespeare. Sir Cedric is quickly exonerated of all except exaggerated acting, and the finger of guilt points straight and unmistakably back at Mr. Cregar. It is palpably just a matter of time before he over-reaches himself, trying to cut Miss Oberon's throat in her dressing-room in Whitechapel. The pause gives Mr. George Sanders an opportunity to pop in a quick sketch of a gentlemanly Scotland Yard detective, and allows Miss Oberon to display fine legs in an extremely modest version of the can-can.

It seems they have decided, temporarily at least, to abandon the attempt to inject a wartime pep note into Deanna Durbin's pictures. At all events, Miss Durbin is back again in her old, happy, Cinderella world in "HIS BUTLER'S SISTER" (Leicester Square). The film has nothing to do with the war, but just so that nobody will accuse Hollywood of being unaware of current problems, they have tacked on a foreword which reads: "The foods, drinks, clothes, shoes, rubber, gas, and other articles consumed or used in this picture are purely imaginary, and have no relation to any actual foods, drinks, clothes, shoes, rubber, gas, and other articles of to-day, rationed and unrationed. Any resemblance is purely accidental. This is a fable of the day before yesterday." Few will grumble.

When first you see His Butler's Sister she has her back to the camera, and is pushing her way—nay, pushing is too rough a word, weaving, insinuating—through a train corridor. As she passes by, the faces of all the male travellers light up with a candid joy, a kind of beatific revelation. Helen of Troy herself could scarcely have brought more sunshine into a Pullman coach. As you have rightly surmised, Helen presently turns round, and reveals the fresh, vernal, slightly chubby features of Deanna Durbin. Deanna plays Ann Carter, a small-town girl with a big city voice, which it is her dream to display to New York composer Charles Gerard (Franchot Tone). The fact that Ann's half-brother (Pat O'Brien) is the Gerard butler is of small avail, since it is the butler's special duty to keep song-birds out of his master's penthouse nest.

Walter Wanger's "Gung Ho!" (Tivoli) specialises in a battalion of U.S. Marine raiders on a dangerous mission, with Randolph Scott for star. After a gruelling training, they travel by submarine to Jap-held Makin Island. Here is the landing party, led by Lieut. Christoforos (J. CARROL NAISH), *rushing ashore to a hand-to-hand struggle with the enemy. "Gung Ho!" is the Marines' battle-cry.*

Ann, however, hasn't travelled all the way from the Middle West to be put off by a little thing like that. Masquerading as the new housemaid, she wins the hearts of five gentlemen's gentlemen, three gentlemen, one Broadway producer, and, finally, the Boss himself. Three times—once in Russian—she nearly succeeds in getting an aria through to the Boss's ears, and at the fourth try quite succeeds. Her rendering of "Turandot" at a Butler's Ball is professional enough to convince a sterner musician than Charles Gerard, who admits to finding his songs "round the corners of odd little streets, in the faces of people, in the sound of ships coming up the harbour—all the same song, with one theme, I Love You."

Luise Rainer comes back to the screen after a five-year absence in "HOSTAGES" (Plaza), but some may feel that, whatever she has been doing in the meantime, she has not been practising much acting. Acting, perhaps, is not the strongest part of "Hostages," which relies more on plot and counter-plot for its effect.

The scene is Prague under German rule. When a young Nazi officer disappears from a restaurant washroom, and his body is later found floating in the river, twenty-six hostages are arrested. One of them is the rich and oily Czech collaborationist, Lev Preissinger (Oscar Homolka). Another is the half-witted washroom attendant, Janoshik (William Bendix). Although the coroner's report on the young Nazi gives the death as suicide, the verdict is changed to murder, so that his German bosses can get hold of Preissinger's coal properties. Preissinger's daughter (Miss Rainer) tries to buy her father's freedom, through a mysterious journalist, Breda (Arturo de Cordova). But Breda, an active member of the Czech Underground, isn't really interested in saving Preissinger. He is only interested in saving Janoshik, who happens to be—you'll never guess—the Brains of the organisation. From this point the plot becomes so complicated that I shall not attempt to describe it.

Except for the artificial happy ending, there is a certain amount of grim conviction about the story of "Hostages," but it could quite easily be more convincing if all the leading players acted better.

Gainsborough's "Time Flies" (Gaumont, Haymarket, and Marble Arch Pavilion) stars TOMMY HANDLEY *as himself turned American company promoter selling shares in a Time Ball. Testing the invention, a mistake is made and the Ball hurls itself into space with himself, wife and the inventor, landing them in Tudor England. Losing no time, he starts auctioning tracts of land in America to the Elizabethans. Here he has knocked down New Jersey for a thousand guineas to the Earl of Jersey* (ANTHONY VARDEN; *right).*

"Bees in Paradise" (New Gallery, February 27), another Gainsborough picture, starring Arthur Askey, has for venue a South Atlantic island. The Queen (ANTOINETTE CELLIER), *who runs her insular kingdom with woman in the ascendant and man for the chores, hears as she gets to her bath that four airmen have baled out over the island. Surrounded by lovely girls, the four men think they have landed in a Paradise, but they are soon disillusioned, and after hairbreadth escapes and mad roof-top chases, they send out an S O S.*

DEANNA DURBIN *and* FRANCHOT TONE *are stars of "His Butler's Sister" (Leicester Square Theatre). As Ann Carter, Deanna takes a trip to New York to brother Martin (Tone). Instead of the wealthy man she had expected, she finds that he is butler to a noted composer. The film is reviewed in this article.*

Well equipped for a nautical adventure, the young DUKE OF KENT *springs aboard a motor-boat prior to taking a trip in the harbour at St. Enedoc, North Cornwall.*

Left: M. MAURICE DEJEAN, *Representative to Foreign Governments in Britain of the French Committee of National Liberation, and* MRS. S. L. SIMPSON *at the Simpson Services Club lunch to "Les Amis des Volontaires Français."*

Right: MLLE. ALICE DELYSIA *(Mme. Kolb-Bernard) was a guest at the Simpson Services Club lunch in honour of "Les Amis des Volontaires Français."*

T/CAPT. MICHAEL STUART HAMILTON, *the Black Watch, elder son of Mr. Stuart Hamilton, married* MISS LYNETTE MACKAY, V.A.D., *daughter of Major J. R. S. Mackay. The Primate officiated.*

Right: MISS JACQUELINE COCHRANE, *noted U.S. airwoman, was appointed in September 1942 Director U.S. Army Air Force training for women pilots for non-combatant duties. She had previously been working as a ferry pilot in the A.T.A.*

TOMMY TRINDER *gave the Eighth Army a front-line show in an improvised theatre during his visit to the Italian front. Here he is putting his stuff over in his usual big way.*

H.M. THE QUEEN *heard a first-hand account of their work from hardy members of the* RESCUE SQUAD *at a Rescue Station of the Yorkshire Coalowners' Association during her visit to the coal-mining area of Yorks with the King.*

WORK AND PLAY, HONOURS AND ROMANCE

PRINCESS ELIZABETH and PRINCESS MARGARET were guests at the wedding of 3RD OFFICER LADY ANNE SPENCER, W.R.N.S., daughter of Earl Spencer, to LIEUT. C. WAKE-WALKER, R.N., son of Vice-Admiral Sir F. Wake-Walker. The reception was at Admiralty House.

Left: MRS. ATTLEE, *wife of the Deputy Prime Minister, drives a Y.M.C.A. mobile canteen, in a round trip to Service units in her home area. She is also Commandant of a detachment of the Red Cross.*

CPL. HAZEL BLISS, W.A.C., *broke a bottle of ginger-pop to christen the Liberator "V for Victory," "G. I. Jane." The ceremony took place at a U.S. bomber station in Britain. The 'plane bears the Pallas Athene device of the W.A.C.s.*

MISS DAPHNE BOSANQUET, *elder daughter of Mr. Nicholas Bosanquet, married* LIEUT.-COLONEL J. A. HUNTER, K.R.R.C., *eldest son of the late Major-General Alan Hunter, and of the Hon. Mrs. Hunter, at St. Margaret's.*

Left: L.A.C. ISABELLA G. LEASK, W.A.A.F., *was decorated by* GENERAL CARL SPAATZ, *Commanding the U.S. Strategic Bombing Force, with the Legion of Merit conferred on her by Mr. Roosevelt "in recognition of valuable services in connection with the war."*

S/LDR. A. K. PASSMORE, D.F.C., F/LIEUT. C. P. STREATFEILD *and* P/O. R. H. SOMERVILLE, D.F.M., *have knocked up between them a total of 220 operational sorties. Passmore has done 74; Streatfeild 65; Somerville 81.*

MEMBERS OF THE A.T.S. *have a new job—searchlight control—and are being trained at a Western Command Depôt. The girls are specially selected for this work, and are given physical training to fit them for it.*

A MIXED BAG OF TOPICAL PICTURES.

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

THIS WREN AND HER SON—*for attending Buckingham Palace in a family party, to receive a decoration each.*

AT a recent Investiture a Wren and her son, SUPT. EUPHEMIA V. WELBY, W.R.N.S., and LIEUT. RICHARD WELBY, R.N., went together to Buckingham Palace to receive their decorations. Supt. Welby, who is in charge of all Wrens at an important naval base on the South Coast, received the C.B.E. awarded to her in the New Year Honours list, and Lieut. R. Welby the D.S.C. for bravery in action in the Sicily landings. They were accompanied to the Palace by Supt. Welby's daughter, a W.R.N.S. officer.

MAJOR-GENERAL F. DE GUINGAND—*for being "Monty's" Chief-of-Staff, Eighth Army, and receiving three awards at one go.*

MR. WALTER HUTCHINSON—*for being first away with Stubbs's "Gimcrack" in the National Gallery of British Sporting Art stakes.*

COMMANDER EDWARD A. GIBBS, R.N., captain of the destroyer *Pathfinder*, who recently received a second and third Bar to his D.S.O., is the first officer in this war to win four D.S.O.s. He gained the awards for actions against U-boats and in convoy.

GENERAL MONTGOMERY'S Chief-of-Staff in the Eighth Army, MAJOR-GENERAL FRANCIS DE GUINGAND, was invested by the King recently with three decorations. He won the D.S.O. at El Alamein, the C.B.E. after the Eighth had fought its way to Tripoli, and the C.B. for the campaign in Sicily. General de Guingand is the forty-three-year-old son of a London manufacturer who lived at Ealing. He was Military Assistant to Mr. Hore-Belisha as War Minister, and afterwards went to the Middle East. Since then he has worked behind the scenes. He was a Brigadier on General Montgomery's Staff when he won his D.S.O. The King, decorating him, said: "Thank you for all you have done."

THE OFFICERS OF H.M.S. "BELFAST"—*for their joint decision that beards save time and lather, and are warmer wear for wintry seas.*

FOLLOWING up the suggestion made by Mr. C. R. W. Carter, the art critic, for the establishment in London of a National Gallery of British Sports and Pastimes, MR. WALTER HUTCHINSON, the publisher, very sportingly made a good start with some forty-five paintings. A few weeks ago he bought at auction the remarkably fine portrait of the Bolingbroke "Gimcrack," by George Stubbs, A.R.A., one of our finest sporting painters, and "Turf," also by Stubbs. "My idea," said Mr. Hutchinson, "is that the new gallery should include pictures relating to every kind of British sport . . . if they were housed together they would attract many visitors."

THE OFFICERS OF H.M.S. "BELFAST," economising in time, lather and razor-blades, and with due regard to warmth in blistering blizzards, have all encouraged hirsute growths on their faces—mostly beards. Far from being a disfigurement, the beards, moustaches and whiskers have a curiously impressive effect, which makes, in our opinion, for an unqualified feeling of confidence. Unfortunately we lack space to publish their names.

NINETEEN-YEAR-OLD LIEUTENANT P. H. HAYDON, Royal Marines, of Penzance, is the hero of memorable acts of gallantry, for which he is awarded the D.S.O. On the Salerno-Naples road he was in command of a troop of Royal Marine Commandos who had seized a defile. Though seriously wounded in the back by shrapnel, he calmly continued to direct the defence, and inspired his men to counter-attack. Again wounded, he refused morphia, wishing to keep his mind alert for the battle. Again the enemy attacked, and he seized a rifle from a dead man with great difficulty because of his wounds, killing four Germans at close range. Then he fainted three times, but, recovering, so controlled the use of the fire-power and set such an example that, "despite the enemy's vast numerical superiority" runs the citation, "the attacks were beaten off."

COMMANDER E. A. GIBBS—*for being this war's first winner of the D.S.O. in quadruplicate.*

LIEUT. P. H. HAYDON—*for the wonderful gallantry on the Salerno-Naples road which won him the D.S.O.*

THE W.A.C.'S ARE HERE—WITH "ZOOT-SUITS" AND 269 JOBS!

"Zoot-suited" for work: a PARADE OF THE UNITED STATES WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS *in Britain, with mess kits, on their way to the canteen.*

W.A.A.F. musicians merged with the band of a U.S. Army Air Corps at a recent parade of the W.A.C.s in this country.

If you want to know a W.A.C.'s nickname, look at the back of her "Zoot-suit": an amusing snapshot of American Service girls in England.

W.A.C.s meet WREN: HAZEL APPLE, *of New Mexico,* VIRGINIA L. BAWDOIN, *of Atlanta, and* COSETTE M. DION, *of Hartford, Conn., with* WREN PAMELA MILLER.

THE W.A.C.s, or the United States Women's Army Corps, are now familiar figures in this country, in their trim olive-green khaki suits and peaked pill-box caps. Their numbers over here have grown considerably since the first contingent disembarked to the strains of "Yankee-Doodle," and Colonel Oveta Culp Hobby, their Director, stated in London last month that there were 1170 W.A.C.s in England out of a total of 2300 serving overseas, and that they had 269 jobs at 272 stations. Fourteen months ago they were doing four jobs on two stations! Their occupations include work as plotters, telephonists, signallers, clerks and so forth. Twenty-six is the average age, and most of the W.A.C.s have thrown up good jobs at home.

WAR CORRESPONDENT CHARLES SEAWOOD *gets first-hand information from home, and also a light from* W.A.C. VONDA COCKRAN, *of Clintwood, Virginia.*

HELEN McKENNA, *of Jersey City, helps* BERNADETTE HAMMER, *of Pitcairn, Penn., to shift her kit.*

LADY LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN, C.B.E., *Superintendent-in-Chief, St. John Ambulance Brigade.* [PHOTOGRAPHS BY HARLIP.]

ADMIRAL LORD LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN, G.C.V.O., C.B.,
[PHOTOGRAPH

SUPREME COMMANDER LORD LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN

ADMIRAL LORD LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN is the youngest of the Supreme Allied Commanders, and the first British officer to be given a Suprem Command. He is a cousin of the King, entered the Royal Navy as a cadet at the age of twelve, served in Lord Beatty's flagships in the la war, and also in submarines, when he was sixteen. His last sea-going command in the rank of Captain, R.N., was in a flotilla of new destroye of the "Kandahar" class. He was then appointed to command the "Illustrious," then refitting in the U.S.A., but was recalled to England

N.B. A Coloured plate is inserted in this issue.

O., R.N., *Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia.*
ARSH, OF OTTAWA.]

LADY LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN, C.B.E. *wife of Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten.*
[PHOTOGRAPHS BY HARLIP.]

AND SUPERINTENDENT-IN-CHIEF LADY LOUIS.

Chief of Combined Operations, with the rank of Commodore. After a few months he was given the acting rank of Vice-Admiral, and at the same time became a Lt.-General and an Air Marshal. LADY LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN was Miss Edwina Ashley, and is the elder daughter of the first Lord Mount Temple. She is Superintendent-in-Chief of the St. John Ambulance Brigade. Recently she has also been Chairman of the British Service Charities Committee, in connection with the U.S. Army show "This is the Army," which, in an eleven weeks' tour, was seen by 250,000 people and raised £80,525.

TOMMY *scrutinises the script of his next* ITMA *broadcast in the comfortable surroundings of his London flat.*

"IT'S THAT MAN AGAIN": TOMMY HANDLEY IN PERSON.

A spot of leisure with book and pipe.

He burnishes his brassie.

"Snodgrass," a mechanical bulldog, is the family pet, much admired by MRS. HANDLEY. *He was sent to Tommy by a fan.*

HERE, minus Mrs. Mopp, Signor Soso and Co., but with his wife, is that master of radio surrealism, TOMMY HANDLEY, truly one of the most popular and subtle word-twisters on the B.B.C. programme. We need dot no i's and cross no t's where he is concerned; it would be useless, anyway, so with some at-home pictures here are a few facts of his career before July 12, 1939, the day when ITMA first came on the air. Liverpool-born, Tommy Handley became an articled clerk on the Liverpool Corn Exchange, but finding the life unsuitable to his volatile, versatile self, he turned to the theatre and went into the chorus at Daly's. Later, as understudy to a comedian, he played the part one night in the lead's absence, and since then he has never looked back. The last war intervening, he served in the Kite Balloon Section, R.N.A.S. He gave his first broadcast in 1924 and has been on the air ever since. In real life Tommy runs true to his ITMA type—he is nearly as crazy, and a great leg-puller. Mrs. Handley was Jean Allistone, the vaudeville and musical comedy actress. They met at Savoy Hill; she was in the cast of one of his first radio performances, and has played in many of his radio revues and pantos. Mrs. Handley is Tommy's chief critic, spends much time dealing with his enormous fan mail, besides attending to the scores of personal callers. The new Handley film "Time Flies" is due at the Gaumont, Haymarket, and Marble Arch Pavilion on February 27.

The Boss of ITMA, *a talented pianist, plays a new tune to entertain his wife during one of his rare quiet evenings at home.*

MARY MARTIN VENUS.

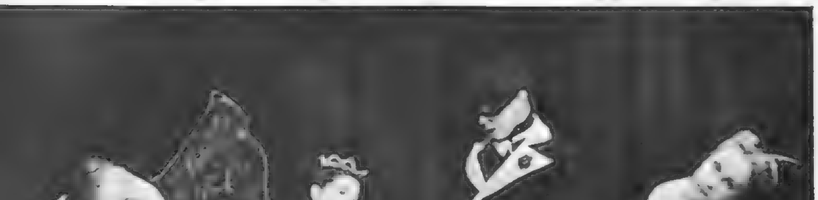
Film-star MARY MARTIN *is the Venus of " One Touch of Venus," the Broadway musical hit. She is starring opposite to Kenny Baker and has a number of first-rate song and dance numbers with him. Mary was a dancer before she made her name as a vocalist. One of her recent successes was in " Happy-Go-Lucky," Technicolor musical, when she gave a modernised version of the old, old song " Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay."*

PHOTOGRAPH BY VANDAMM STUDIO.

Anthony Tudor's "Gala Performance" is danced to music by Prokofiev. JOAN McCLELLAND, *as Goddess of the Dance, and* MICHAEL BAYSTON *are centre.*

MARGARET SCOTT *and* ROBERT HARROLD *also dance in "Gala Performance," a ballet contrasting the behaviour of dancers before and during the show.*

SALLY GILMOUR, *prima ballerina, for whom the pundits predict a brilliant future, with* MICHAEL BAYSTON *in a scene from "Les Masques."*



"Les Masques," sophisticated Frederick Ashton ballet, to Poulenc's music. In the box are ANNE ASHLEY *and* ROBERT HARROLD.

"Lady Into Fox" is Andrée Howard's ingenious ballet after David Garnett's novel, to music by Honegger. Here SALLY GILMOUR *combines the wistful charm of the young woman with the wild nature of the creature of the fields, and* ROBERT HARROLD *is the distracted husband.*

THE little Mercury Theatre, Notting Hill Gate, is the home of the Ballet Rambert for a five-weeks season. Madame Rambert is presenting fifteen of her repertoire of English ballets, none of which has been seen in London for nearly four years. The company has just completed a year's tour for the C.E.M.A., dancing for factory and Service audiences on stages small and large. Its members give ample proof of ability and inspiration.

BALLET RAMBERT, AT THE MERCURY.

SARA LUZITA,
OF THE BALLET RAMBERT.

Young star of the Ballet Rambert, SARA LUZITA *had the bad luck to strain her ankle, and was not dancing during the first three days of the Ballet Rambert season at the Mercury. However, she is back on the stage again. One of her finest parts is that of the Italian ballerina in "Gala Performance"; and she is a delicious Cuckoo in "The Carnival of Animals" ballet by Andrée Howard, the choreographer of "Lady Into Fox." Sara is also a magnificent performer of Spanish dances, a beautiful young girl, and a coming star.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY CECIL BEATON.

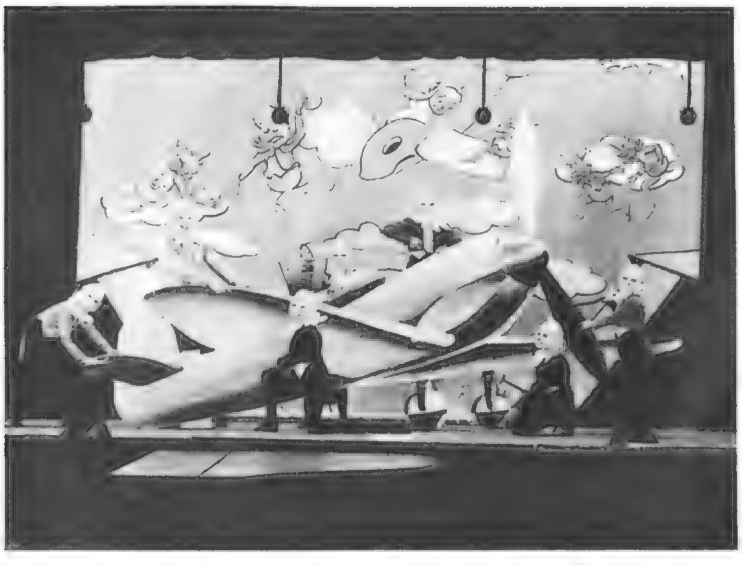
Cinderafella (CPL. DAISY SHARPE) goes to the ball in a Spitfire. Her up-to-the-moment godmother has produced it from an orange.

CPL. HARRY LARK, M.M., and L.A.C.W. PEGGY MOORE as the Hon. Hollyhock and the Hon. Aspidistra Stoneybroke, the Ugly Sisters.

"CINDERAFELLA"—THE R.A.F. PANTO. OF TRUE LOVE.

"CINDERAFELLA": A PANTOMIME OF TRUE LOVE IN THE R.A.F., produced by Flying Officer Cecil Landeau, and the personnel of an R.A.F. Fighter Station in the Home Counties, was presented last week at the station. Everything in the old Cinderella story was brought into line with modern thought. Cinderella's coach is superseded by an orange Spitfire, and Gremlins played a part in the show.

CPL. BABS WILSON-HILL as the Première Danseuse surrounded with her corps de ballet of fairies.



Obviously there must be GREMLINS in an R.A.F. pantomime. Here the little goblins are at work on Cinderafella's Spitfire.

The Head Gremlin (FLIGHT LIEUT. C. B. HARDWICKE) is posed with his six junior Gremlins—all played by village children.

"Name?"; "Er—Smith. Smith from London." Zachariah Policeman (LYN EVANS), Job (RODDY HUGHES), Smith (MICHAEL SHEPLEY), Kate (GLADYS HENSON), Tommos (BRYNMOR THOMAS), and (back to camera) Glan (RICHARD BURTON).

"What's that big 'eadline?" Job, Glan, Zachariah Policeman, Sarah Jane (NUNA DAVEY), Tommos and Kate are startled to read in the paper that the wanted man in connection with the "Brides in the Bath" crime has been found.

WELSH VILLAGE COMEDY: "THE DRUID'S REST."

EMLYN WILLIAMS' new play, "THE DRUID'S REST," presented at the St. Martin's Theatre, is a Welsh village comedy. The innkeeper and his family are determined to win the Eisteddfod prize with their choir, and to beat their "Moaning Methody's" rivals. The arrival of "Smith from London" rouses suspicions that he is the wanted man in a "Brides in the Bath" murder case; and there are cross-purposes and misunderstandings by the score before it is revealed that he is only the local peer putting on a Haroun-el-Raschid act. Brynmor Thomas, a Rhondda Valley lad, formerly a butcher's boy, makes his stage début as Tommos, and gives a first-rate performance.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN VICKERS.

The Edwards family, clad in their Sunday best, start off to chapel: Kate (GLADYS HENSON), Glan (RICHARD BURTON), Job (RODDY HUGHES) and Tommos (BRYNMOR THOMAS) (l. to r.).

Tommos, self-instituted detective, examines the hat-box brought by Smith, the mysterious visitor from London, who has arrived at the inn.

"What rhymes with Adam?" Issmal Hughes (NEIL PORTER), Kate, Glan, Zachariah Policeman, Job, Sarah Jane and Tommos cudgel their brains to write suitable verse for the village choir to sing.

"I seed you was English by your knickerbockers"; Sarah Jane (NUNA DAVEY) betrays her curiosity in regard to the new arrival, the mysterious Englishman, Smith from London (MICHAEL SHEPLEY).

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

THE late Sir Edmund Gosse, I am told, was fond of quoting this little couplet:

> It 's human nature! If that 's so,
> Isn't human nature low?

In his day, no doubt, the wickedness of the world may have been one of its more interesting and amusing aspects. Now, we have seen a good deal of that aspect, and catch ourselves wishing there was something else to look at. But should we really want to, if there was? There have been three films about Jack the Ripper, "the most intriguing of all murderers," but I never heard of one about St. Francis. William Blake said that anyone who hoped to do good must do it in "minute particulars" but it is plain that almost anyone who wishes to do harm can do so on a grand scale. Newspapers and novelists alike bear witness to this truth.

Miss Compton-Burnett, like the characters in her stories, wraps up her meaning in so many layers of irony that one cannot always be sure what it is. She is quite capable of being ironical at the expense of irony. The title of her latest book, "Elders and Betters," is an ironical phrase in common use. But does she mean it ironically? She writes of two families living before the time of motor-cars and occupying houses adjacent to each other and some miles from a railway station. Their world is a microcosm insulated from the outside world. One family is comprised of a widower and his four children, of whom the three elder are practically grown up; in the other household are the widower's brother-in-law, his two sisters, one an invalid hourly expecting, and foretelling, her death, and four children, two grown-up and two in the care of a governess—though hardly in need of her, considering their advanced mental development. As is usual with Miss Compton-Burnett, most of the story is told in dialogue.

"Dear, dear" [said Anna], "what clever talk it all is!"

"It sounds so," said Jenny on a puzzled note. "And yet it is all about nothing, isn't it?"

"Show us how to talk about something, Miss Jennings," said Benjamin.

See how Miss Compton-Burnett puts her tongue out at her critics! After this we can hardly say "her conversations are all about nothing," even if we felt inclined to, which I don't.

Effects of a Crime.

But there is a moment of action, on which the whole plot turns. One of the juniors, taking advantage of an elder's sudden death, burns the will which ordered a just and equitable disposition of the deceased's money, and preserves the one (destined by the dead lady for destruction) which leaves the money to her, the junior. The consequences are far-reaching, but the most immediate are the suicide of another elder, who felt she had not treated her dead sister with sufficient kindness, and the marriage of the criminal (for such she must be called) to her cousin—her main objective, it must be added, in destroying the will. One hopes that the Moral Law will be vindicated, but there seems every prospect that the couple will live on, enjoying their aunt's money and whatever happiness their diverse temperaments allow them. Of the rash of marriages that breaks out at the end I will say nothing, except that it scarcely seems as though Miss Compton-Burnett was taking her story or her readers seriously.

The criminal is an odious character, and would seem more so if she were not always being "picked on" by a critical brother. Of the two sisters of the older generation who die, the invalid is tiresome, exacting and unbalanced, but the other, slightly though she is drawn, leaves an ineffaceable impression of charm and goodness. The story gets its moral light and shade from the contrast between this enchanting woman and her revolting niece: to that extent Miss Compton-Burnett might appear to think that elders are also betters, and it seems a little cynical to let the niece have everything she wants, including (it is to be feared) a good conscience.

Other characters that stand out are Terence, the philosophically-minded loafer; Claribel, who brings every topic of conversation round to herself; the two children with their altar in the garden, and the two servants. The latter are drawn with extraordinary subtlety, and are at once comic and full of dignity. Anti-realistic, careless and even defiant of probability as it is, Miss Compton-Burnett's work sometimes seems nearer to reality than that of any living English novelist. "Elders and Betters" is a particularly good example of it.

Fun in Lancashire.

Mr. Frank Tilsley's scene is Northpool, a popular Lancashire seaside town. Thither comes Tom Matthews, a miner on a week's holiday—a nice, quiet lad. Naturally, he visits Pleasure Beach, the Amusement Park. An acquaintance tells him:

"There 's probably more real tragedy on this place, Pleasure Beach, than any other place you 'd find in a day's march. More, say, than in the same space in a distressed area. Perhaps more than in the same space on a battlefield. . . . And perhaps there 's as much violence as on the same space on a battlefield. Pleasure Beach is packed with misfits and thugs. . . . Talk about Chicago! This lot are about the most violent and lawless mob out of clink. Most of them would cut your throat for twopence."

A Rogues' Gallery.

After his wallet had been stolen by a fellow-lodger, and after he had "bilked" his landlady and was wanted by the police, Tom Matthews, under another name, took various jobs at Pleasure Beach and found that the place fully lived up to his friend's description—at least, he would have found that, had he been as quick in the uptake as those round him, for he was "soft" and "daft" and slow to think ill of anyone. Still, he was lucky to have missed Stevens when (under provocation) he fired a revolver at him. Stevens, an ex-pugilist, is the principal thug. Passion with violence is his speciality and the reason why he drinks and dreads the police; but he is meditating another deed of the same kind and has marked down his victim. I did not find Stevens very convincing. Silvo, the slippery auctioneer of watches, is a more interesting psychological study, ashamed of his physical cowardice and anxious to overcome it. His love for Peg barely survives marriage and the discovery that she already has a five-year-old daughter and is shortly to have another child, almost certainly by another father: Peg herself is not quite sure. But she thinks it would be better to start matrimony without this handicap, and dies in the attempt to procure an abortion. Behind and above these pawns of the pleasure racket are the financiers who run it—"the Squire," Jack Baker the impulsive, and the virtuous-seeming Dixon: "the Squire" is the shadiest of the lot, and it is he and some of his cronies who engineer the outbreak of hooliganism which is meant to put Baker wrong with the police. This outbreak, in which a good many people get hurt, is the climax of the story. The police are represented as taking a lenient view of it; even Stevens gets let off lightly; and the financial bosses, including "the Squire" and his "victim," meet together amicably to discuss plans for the future entertainment of Northpool.

"Pleasure Beach" is a rogues' gallery full of lively portraits. Mr. Tilsley turns a tolerant eye to their shortcomings, and enjoys their zest for life. He is also a considerable psychologist. The story, for all its length, moves quickly and is very well written.

Mother and Daughter.

The seamy side of life is much less in evidence in "Mildred Pierce" than it was in "The Postman Always Knocks Twice"; but, all the same, in Veda Pierce Mr. James Cain has created a startlingly unpleasant woman. Veda is Mildred's daughter and the apple of her eye. Indeed, her main object in life is to give Veda everything she wants—and she wants a great deal, above all, social position. Left penniless after turning out of the house her unsatisfactory husband, Bert, Mildred gradually makes a living, first as a waitress, then as proprietor of a group of restaurants. Veda felt her mother's profession was a handicap to her social ambitions, and often told her so. Longing for love, and almost too ready to give it, Mildred had no lasting success with the tender passion. She adored Monty, the fashionable polo-player, and quixotically married him when he had lost his money and she had temporarily made some; but her daughter stole him from her, and in the end she returns to Bert and, it is to be feared, the bottle. One of the few occasions when we can feel glad on her behalf is when she is finally disillusioned about Veda—and that is one of the bitterest moments of her life.

The Zest for Living.

It is a sad and savage story, but there is so much movement and incident in it that one sometimes forgets how sad it is. Mildred had more than her share of American hopefulness and go; California is a cheerful place, and she had several helpful, if not always constant, friends. Mr. Cain seems to understand the restaurant business from A to Z; the clatter of plates, the smell of the kitchen, the whirl of orders, the sense of noise and bustle, banish melancholy. Mildred's enterprises brought her many a small triumph, and Veda's success as a singer was, at any rate to begin with, nectar to her. (That success, achieved so quickly, is rather surprising after her dismal failure as a pianist. Mr. Cain's knowledge of music, though impressive, is not quite so convincing as his knowledge of catering.) The feeling of a thriving community, pressing forward, intent on business deals, snatching at pleasures, full of kindness and unkindness, is very strong in the book, and consoles us, to some extent, for the fate of those who fall by the way. Sheer vitality, rather than the achievement of security or happiness or goodness, is what Mr. Cain seems to require from human life, and all his characters have it.

BOOKS REVIEWED.

Elders and Betters. By I. Compton-Burnett. (*Gollancz; 9s. 6d.*)
Pleasure Beach. By Frank Tilsley. (*Collins; 10s. 6d.*)
Mildred Pierce. By James M. Cain. (*Robert Hale; 8s. 6d.*)

THE LONDON GALLERIES.

LEGER, 13, Old Bond Street.
Water-colour drawings: "Rowlandson Until the Present Day."

LEFEVRE, 1a, King Street, St. James's.
New paintings and drawings by Cecil Collins.

LEICESTER GALLERIES: *Sculpture and Drawings by Frank Dobson. Paintings by Robin and Fay Pearce.*

FINE ART SOCIETY, 148, New Bond Street.
Dürer, Rembrandt and some Modern Etchings.

REDFERN, 20, Cork Street.
Matthew Smith, Raoul Dufy, Lascaux, Ravilious paintings, collotypes, etc.

ROYAL SOC. OF PAINTER-ETCHERS AND ENGRAVERS, 26 Conduit Street, W.1.

NATIONAL GALLERY, Trafalgar Square.
Paintings by Official War Artists. Selected Masterpiece. Canadian War Paintings.

RICH SUBURBIA AND THE BRAVE NEW WORLD: "A SOLDIER FOR CHRISTMAS."

"My husband has always loved tall women. . . ." Brenda (JOAN HARBEN, *r.*) *bores Lady Daubeny* (SUSAN RICHMOND), *Mrs. Ferguson* (JOYCE BARBOUR), *Mr. Ferguson* (J. LESLIE FRITH) *and Phœbe* (PAULINE LETTS) *with her troubles.*

"I think Mrs. Ferguson intended her rooms to be used singly"; Ronald Vines (TREVOR HOWARD) *speaks his mind to Milly* (MERIEL FORBES) *and Private Bill Mackenzie* (ROBERT BEATTY).

"A SOLDIER FOR CHRISTMAS," at Wyndham's, is a gay little comedy set in a rich suburban house. Mrs. Ferguson, the hostess, is determined to keep in tune with the brave new world and be democratic. She invites a Canadian private for Christmas, and when Milly Smith, her ex-parlourmaid, arrives as a N.A.A.F.I. billetee, she treats her as a guest and won't let her help to wash up. So far so good, but things get tense when Phœbe Ferguson falls in love with the Canadian, who has already been marked down by Milly. Lady Daubeny, the aristocrat, who knows her day is over, Mrs. Jones, the cook, who prefers uplift to cooking, and the charlady, who is awaiting the day of a revolutionary blood-bath, are other characters.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEXANDER BENDER.

"I wouldn't lift a leg for humanity. Have you any gin?" Brenda (left); the very high-minded uplift-conscious cook, Mrs. Jones (WINIFRED HINDLE), *and Lady Daubeny (right).*

Ex-parlourmaid Milly (MERIEL FORBES), *having joined the N.A.A.F.I., comes back as a billetee, and competes with the daughter of the house for the Canadian soldier.*

"The day's coming. Rivers of blood. . . . That's what it will be." Mrs. Jarvis, the Communist charlady (FRANCES WARING), *describes the coming revolution to Mrs. Ferguson.*

Lady Daubeny, uninvited guest at Mrs. Ferguson's Christmas party, lights a cigar. She has come to consult the philosophical cook, Mrs. Jones.

"Perhaps you'd like my seat?"—"That's all right. There's room for me here"; Phœbe Ferguson (left) tries Commando tactics to get Bill away from Milly.

"HOME IS THE SAILOR . . ." *

By EDWARD CRANSTON.

HAND-IN-HAND, they walked up the steep hill away from the port, towards the point where a red-brick cottage made a bold slash of colour against the green turf. Below them the buildings of the little town crowded against the foot of the hill as if drawing fearfully away from the gaunt, harsh lines of the dockyard sprouting like some ugly growth on the fringe of the bay. From far off on the still water a ship's siren hooted, and a few minutes later another answered. Somewhere close at hand a thrush broke into uneasy song. It was Sunday afternoon.

The woman—she was little more than a girl really—paused in her walk and bent to pick up something from the ground. The man stood still beside her, staring at the cottage. The two gold bands on his sleeve caught the sun's rays and glinted sharply. The girl stood up, smiling, and looked at him.

" Sorry, darling—thought it was a four-leaved clover ! "

He laughed absently.

" Looks all right," he said, " that cottage."

His companion slipped her arm through his and followed his gaze. " I hope so," she thought. " Oh, I do hope so ! "

This had happened many times—this search for somewhere to live in a strange place. Standing there on the hillside, looking up at the cottage, with the wind ruffling her hair and the distant, unfriendly smell of the sea in her nostrils, she found the memories of all those other times crowding into her mind. The first one, for instance—it seemed centuries ago now—when she had obeyed the instructions in her husband's laconic telegram and rushed all the way down to Devon with only two suit-cases and a hastily-constructed parcel filled with tins of food. It had taken them three weeks to find somewhere to live then. Three weeks of anxious searching, while the hotel bill had grown and grown, until she had almost wished he would be sent away somewhere so that she could leave. And then at last, when they had arranged to share a house with two old spinsters, he had been sent away. Four days they had spent together in that house, and then his ship had sailed. In a whirl of profuse apologies and no less emphatic assurances that it didn't really matter at all, she had packed up and left. Back to London and her mother's house ; back to the lonely waiting and the fear she would never admit—and then, out of the blue, another telegram. More frenzied packing, a last-minute dash to the station, the express screaming northward through the night, and then his sunburnt, rather tired face smiling at her from the platform.

" Darling, I 'm afraid I haven't fixed up anything yet, but it should be easy enough."

But it wasn't. At first they had moved into someone's flat on a weekly tenancy, and during the month they lived there she came to love it. She had her own kitchen, her own key to the front door, her own pictures—hurriedly sent from London—hanging on the walls of the bedroom.

Then one day there had been a letter from the tenants : " We are so sorry to have to turn you out like this, but . . ." He was on duty in the ship that day and she had gone out alone to look for somewhere else. She remembered it all very clearly. It had been raining, and her feet were cold and damp in her thin shoes. His captain's wife had given her an address. She found it after what seemed hours of wrong directions and roads that led nowhere. The smiling woman at the door had given her a cup of tea but no rooms. She would have done, of course, but she was full up. . . . " There 's Mrs. Waller, just across the street, though—she 's new here, but she looks all right to me. You might try there. . . ."

She tried Mrs. Waller. Oh, yes, she would be only too glad to take them. She liked naval people. Her uncle had been in the Navy—on one of those Dreadnoughts, you know. But the rent for a bedroom and a sitting-room would be five guineas a week. You couldn't make it less these days ; you 'd like to, of course, but what with the higher cost of living . . .

Outside in the street the rain was beating down on the streaming pavements and splashing into the already-full gutters.

" Thank you so much. We 'll take the rooms by the week."

Mrs. Waller beamed and bent to put a match to the fire.

" Of course," she said, " lighting and heat will be extra."

They had stayed there for two months. A time of half-whispered sentences and uneasy laughter, followed by quick, embarrassed silences as Mrs. Waller came in to lay the table or attend to the black-out. And then he had left again.

" See you soon, darling—God knows where ! "

As she sat in the taxi waiting for the driver to light his cigarette, Mrs. Waller had come waddling out of the house, her face wreathed in smiles : " So sorry, dear—I knew you wouldn't mind. This bill has just come from the laundry for sheets—I 'd do it all myself, but you know what it is . . ."

She knew what it was. Never again, she thought—never again, Mrs. Waller.

Next time it was much easier. He had written to her saying that he had arranged to share a flat with another man and his wife.

" It will be grand, darling—no housekeeping, no worries . . ."

It had been grand. Until the other man had come home late one night and announced that, although he still loved his wife very dearly, he had come to the conclusion that it was wiser for them to part, and consequently he had arranged to leave for good and all in the morning.

She had coped with the hysterics, rung up the doctor and the lawyer, soothed an outraged mother and explained to a whole collection of bemused relations. And after all the initial fuss was over she had agreed to stay on and look after the housekeeping. She remembered now the evenings when they had sat round the fire, all three of them, while she and her husband waited for the sudden, uncontrolled burst of sobbing or the bitter, scathing torrent of words. After a time it had become impossible. They had left, and in their turn received the well-known flood recriminations.

And then they had been lucky. Mrs. Potts—fat, motherly old Mrs. Potts, with her furtive glasses of port and her atrocious Sunday lipstick. Mrs. Potts, who had greeted them on the doorstep with her hair in curling-pins and her hands still sticky with dough from the kitchen : " Of course, I usually only take professionals, but if you don't mind . . ."

They didn't mind. They loved her. But even with Mrs. Potts there were times when she longed to be able to go into the kitchen and make his favourite kind of *pilau* for supper or replan the comfortable front room as she would have planned a room of her own. . . . Even with Mrs. Potts there was something lacking.

Together they walked on up the hill and knocked at the door of the cottage. An unshaven man in his shirt-sleeves opened it. He looked strained and tired.

" Sorry, but my Annie was took last Thursday—we 're all a bit upset, if you understand . . ." He smiled vaguely at them, as if he wasn't quite sure of what to do next.

" I 'm so sorry," said the girl.

They sat on the hillside with their backs to the cottage. For a long time they were silent, then he plucked savagely at a piece of grass.

" Never mind, darling—we 'll have another go to-morrow."

She looked up at his worried face and smiled.

" I don't mind where we are," she said, " as long as we 're together."

But walking down the hill a little later, back towards the sea and the ships and the growing hum of the busy dockyard, she thought : " Some day, perhaps, we shall have a home—a home of our own . . ."

[THE END.]

**All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.*

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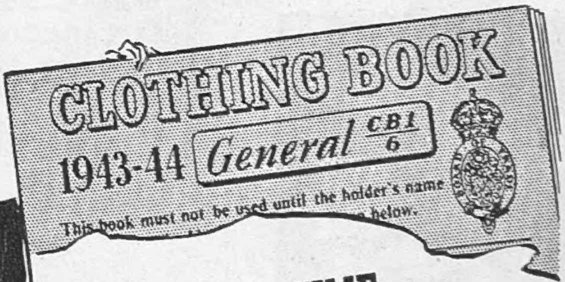

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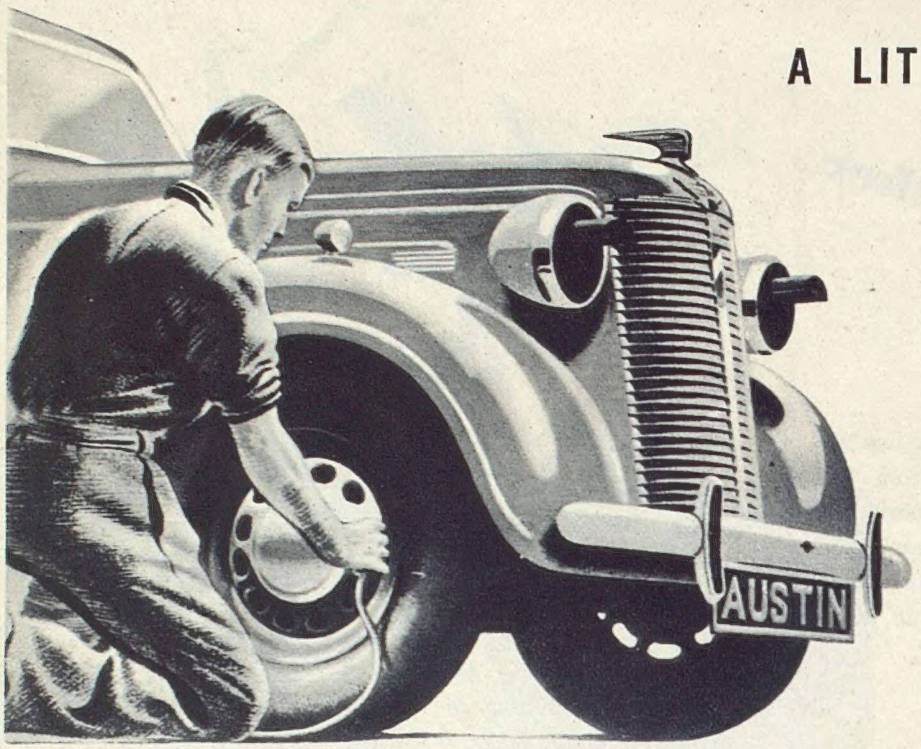

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IDOL WORDS

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"*Oh, you mean Fred? I picked him up in a junk shop in Capetown. Cost me half-a-crown.*"

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"*Fred is an Awful Warning. Fred symbolises the Morning After the Night Before. He's the spectre at the cocktail party and the skeleton at the Annual Dinner.*"

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"*Time, brother, time. Since I discovered the virtues of Rose's Lime Juice, Fred has had to take a back seat. Hangovers just can't happen when one sticks to Gin and Lime—or knocks back a straight Rose's after the party.*"

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